

Titan King 151

Chapter 151 Invasion over, withdraw and return

Orion didn't answer Delilah's question. Truthfully, he didn't know what to do next either.

"Did Lord Gareth anticipate this situation? Does she have a backup plan?"

Orion's thoughts grew heavier as he tried to take a broader view of the current predicament, considering the challenges from a strategic perspective.

"Maybe even Lord Gareth didn't expect Greenstorm, Darkbolt, and Silvershock to be this strong," he muttered to himself.

And he was right.

Lord Gareth had indeed underestimated the Thunderstorm Bear brothers. Stormrage City's defenders were like an unbreakable wall of steel.

After a long silence, Orion finally snapped out of his thoughts. He glanced at Delilah and shared his conclusion.

"For now, there's nothing we can do. We'll stay here and wait for news."

Delilah blinked, confused.

"Wait for news?"

"Yes, wait for news. Either Lord Gareth will send reinforcements, or we'll receive orders to retreat. If that happens, the Invasion ends here."

"Dear chieftain, what if Lord Gareth blames us for this?"

"Blame us? Heh..."

Orion chuckled softly. Would Lord Gareth blame him?

Of course, she would.

But Orion had his reasons. If not for his exceptional physical resilience, he would have ended up like Thunderwing last night—reduced to nothing but a bloodstain, a casualty of Greenstorm's final attack.

Speaking of Thunderwing, she was perhaps the most unfortunate of them all.

From the earlier battle and the exchanges between Thunderwing and Greenstorm, Orion had deduced that Thunderwing had likely been sent to assist Stormrage City.

But she could never have anticipated being obliterated by Greenstorm's energy blast when he lost his sanity.

In short, if Lord Gareth truly wanted to conquer Stormrage City without personally leading the charge, she would need to sacrifice at least four Alpha-level powerhouses.

The cost was simply too high.

"Prophet, Rendall, are you both alright?"

Onyx and Rendall shook their heads, their expressions filled with gratitude. If not for Orion's warning, they would have either died or been gravely injured in the chaos.

Orion's gaze shifted to Slagor, who quickly shook his head and put on a sincere look of appreciation.

"Orion, from now on, I'll follow your lead!"

Slagor wasn't foolish enough to suggest another assault on Stormrage City. Only a madman would charge back into that death trap.

Slagor was more than happy to wait things out until the Myriad Races Invasion officially ended.

"Taking Stormrage City isn't as simple as we thought," Orion said, his tone heavy.

"After this battle, their defenses will only grow tighter. And there's a chance Lord Ariel might send reinforcements."

Orion's words made Slagor jump to his feet in alarm.

"Orion, we should retreat immediately! If Lord Ariel's reinforcements arrive, we won't even have a chance to escape!"

Orion glanced at Slagor and shook his head.

"If we delay too long, Lord Gareth will notice as well. Who knows? We might even receive reinforcements from her."

At that moment, a sharp cry echoed through the forest canopy.

It was the screech of a thunderhawk—a sound everyone in the camp was used to.

Since Orion's forces included members of the Skytalon Tribe, no one paid it much attention.

But Orion, who could understand the thunderhawk's language, narrowed his eyes as his thoughts deepened.

The thunderhawk he had recently tamed had not been used in battle. Orion had kept it as a hidden card, a trump for emergencies.

Now, that trump card was delivering a message: a Storm Vulture was approaching.

This could only mean one thing—Lord Gareth's messenger was on the way.

The messenger could be bringing one of three things: a demand for progress, reinforcements, or an order to retreat.

These possibilities flashed through Orion's mind in an instant.

After a long pause, Orion turned to Slagor and said, "Retreating now isn't an option. If Lord Gareth blames us later, will you take responsibility?"

"Also, send out all your scouts. I want to know the movements of our enemies in Stormrage City and ensure our retreat route is clear."

Orion's plan was simple: stay vigilant while preparing for a potential retreat.

Slagor and Delilah both nodded in agreement.

Orion's orders made it clear that he was already considering a withdrawal, which Slagor wholeheartedly supported.

By nightfall, Arden arrived at the camp, riding his Storm Vulture.

"By Lord Gareth's command, Orion, Slagor—you are to retreat immediately!"

"This southern invasion ends here!"

Orion narrowed his eyes but said nothing, ignoring Arden entirely.

Slagor, on the other hand, hurried forward, bowing and scraping as he struck up a conversation with Arden, exchanging information.

Orion turned to his subordinates and issued his orders.

"Spread the word. Break camp immediately. We're going home."

The word "home" carried a magical weight, bringing smiles to the faces of everyone who heard it.

With the retreat underway, there was much to do.

"Take stock of all supplies, slaves, and captives. We're taking everything with us," Orion instructed Delilah.

Delilah nodded but hesitated, as if she wanted to say something.

"Speak your mind," Orion said.

"Dear chieftain, we have a lot of supplies, but I don't have enough people to manage it all."

Orion nodded and turned to Rendall.

"Elder, now that our cannon fodder troops have been significantly reduced, it's time to reorganize them."

"Rank the members of the cannon fodder troops based on their contributions, from Level 1 to Level 9. Level 1 is the lowest, Level 9 the highest."

"Those who reach Level 9 and show exceptional talent will be absorbed into the Stoneheart Horde's regular forces."

"As for the rest, any useless captives will be added to the cannon fodder troops. We can't afford to waste food on those who don't contribute."

Orion paused for a moment, then turned to Prophet Onyx.

"Prophet, you work with Rendall. I need the cannon fodder troops reorganized as quickly as possible."

Onyx nodded, his expression serious.

"Once the troops are reorganized, they'll assist Delilah in transporting all our supplies back to Moonshadow Valley."

This was Orion's true goal.

A reorganized and disciplined cannon fodder force would ensure the safe transport of their hard-earned spoils.

"Also, about the maps—Prophet, make the necessary arrangements."

Black Forest, Moonshadow Valley

Lilith directed the battle while casting Illusions: Mind Confusion, disrupting the senses of the underground worms crawling up the fissure walls. The disoriented worms hesitated, unable to advance further.

Taking advantage of the moment, Thundar and the bloodline warriors hurled spears and fired arrows, killing the worms one by one.

This defensive counterattack had become a routine over the past few days.

Three days ago, the underground fissure had begun spewing out waves of worms, and the situation had only grown worse.

To prevent Moonshadow Valley from falling, Lilith had organized a defensive force to kill every worm that emerged.

Fortunately, Lilith had ordered stone walls to be built around the canyon beforehand. Without them, the situation would have been far more dire.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Spears flew through the air, pinning the worms trying to crawl out of the fissure. Furious hisses echoed from the depths of the underground fissure, filled with frustration and rage.

"Finally, we've pushed them back again!"

As the worms retreated, Lilith let out a long sigh of relief. For three days, her nerves had been stretched to their limit, and she hadn't had a moment to relax.

"Lilith, you should rest. I'll keep watch here," Thundar said as he approached from the edge of the fissure, his tone filled with concern.

Lilith nodded, then paused to think.

"I'll leave little Lorelia here. If anything happens, have her notify me immediately."

"I'll rest for half a day and come back to relieve you, Elder Thundar."

Thundar nodded in agreement. He hadn't slept in three days and nights either, but his condition was slightly better than Lilith's.

"Little Lorelia, send out your hatched children to monitor the fissure closely!"

"Mistress, don't worry. I'll make sure nothing gets past us!"

Spider Queen Lorelia, now resembling a sixteen- or seventeen-year-old girl in her upper body, had recently advanced to hero-level. Her hatched spiderlings now possessed combat capabilities.

Over the past two days, her spiderlings had been instrumental in defending the fissure. Without them, holding the line would have been nearly impossible.

"Still no news from the south?" Lilith asked.

Thundar shook his head. There was no word from Orion.

"If only the chieftain, the prophet, or Rendall were here," Thundar muttered, finally realizing just how crucial an Alpha-level presence was to the horde.

Thunderwood Forest, Somewhere in the Dense Woods

Before leaving, Arden met with Orion face-to-face.

Through his exchange of information with Slagor, Arden had come to understand that the giant before him was not only powerful but also brimming with potential.

As the Storm Vulture carrying Arden disappeared into the distance, Orion glanced at Slagor.

"So, what did Arden tell you?"

Slagor frowned, his voice heavy as he watched the Storm Vulture shrink into a black dot on the horizon.

"Lord Gareth and Lord Ariel fought fiercely at Thunderpeak Mountain. The result? Lord Gareth announced a retreat."

"The scorpions to the west also encountered a powerful enemy. They're pinned down and unable to advance."

Orion lowered his head in thought. Both pieces of news pointed to one conclusion: Lord Ariel's faction and personal strength were superior to Lord Gareth's.

"Anything else?"

Slagor shook his head, his tone tinged with frustration.

"That guy's tight-lipped. I couldn't get much out of him."

"Orion, I suspect Gareth might be injured," Slagor added, lowering his voice and glancing around to ensure no one else was nearby.

Orion raised an eyebrow, surprised by Slagor's boldness.

"You're not afraid of dying anymore?"

"Aren't you worried Gareth will punish you for saying that?"

Slagor looked up, feigning confusion.

"What are you talking about, Orion? I don't understand a word you're saying."

Pfft!

Orion couldn't help but laugh. Slagor was too clever for his own good, immediately denying his own words.

"Alright, whatever happens, it's none of our business."

"I didn't hear anything today," Orion said, tossing out the words as he turned and headed back to his tent.

Slagor watched Orion's retreating figure and thought to himself, * This giant is smart. We'll work well together in the future. *

With that, Orion and Slagor's forces quickened their pace, moving northward.

Thunderwood Forest, Thunderpeak Mountain

"Lord, Greenstorm of Stormrage City is dead. Elder Thunderwing was... also killed by Greenstorm."

"The giant you wanted to hunt has escaped. They're moving toward Half-Moon Lake."

"Should we pursue and eliminate them?"

Lord Ariel sat on her throne, her eyes closed.

After a long moment, she calmed her turbulent emotions and spoke slowly.

"Let them go."

"They'll invade the south again. There will be plenty of opportunities in the future."

"Have our people focus on reconnaissance. Once the enemy leaves Thunderwood Forest, send our forces to guard key areas."

"And one more thing—prepare to drive the beast tide northward before winter."

The harpy elder bowed and left to carry out her orders.

Lord Ariel's complexion was pale. Her battle with Lord Gareth had left both of them injured, making it unwise for her to move.

"Hmph... Gareth, this winter will be hell for you."

"Beast tides, dark beast tides, and invasions from the north—those icefield monsters are even more savage and hungry than you..."

"And you're injured, too... hahaha!"

The thought of Gareth struggling through the winter made Lord Ariel laugh uncontrollably.

"And that damned giant... I hope you survive the onslaught of those monsters!"

The Myriad Races Invasion, a tradition passed down for countless years, was far more than just a name.

Every year, northern lords organized invasions into the south to seize resources.

This wasn't unique to Gareth's territory—other regions did the same.

For lords, invading the south was a necessity to secure resources, faith, and power. It was an unspoken rule.

Just as Gareth could invade Thunderwood Forest to the south, enemies from the far north could invade Gareth's lands.

For years, the northern enemies had been quiet, likely gathering strength.

Next year, they would begin their invasion.

Orion, of course, had no idea about any of this.

At the moment, he was meeting with Dirtclaw, who had recently been promoted to an eighth-level slave leader.

"Dirtclaw, prepare yourself. When we pass through the gnoll territory, we'll take your women and children with us."

"Their safety and management will be your responsibility."

"You're still the chieftain of the gnoll tribe."

Dirtclaw was stunned. Over the past few days, as he followed Orion's forces in retreat, his greatest fear had been abandonment.

Dirtclaw feared that Orion would discard him and his tribe.

With the war ending, the cannon fodder troops' purpose was nearing its conclusion.

As the former leader of the gnoll tribe, Dirtclaw knew all too well that in peacetime, cannon fodder troops were nothing more than a drain on resources.

The most likely outcome for such troops was abandonment.

Abandoned gnolls wouldn't survive in Thunderwood Forest. They would be slaughtered by other races.

"Great chieftain, your generosity and vision are unmatched!"

"Honorable master, thank you for your mercy. Dirtclaw will serve you until death!"

Orion raised a hand, cutting off Dirtclaw's flattery.

"Dirtclaw, eighth-level slave leader of the cannon fodder troops, hear my command. For your contributions, I hereby promote you to the seventy-third elder of the Stoneheart Horde. You will lead the gnoll tribe and enjoy the privileges of a regular elder."

"Your branch of the gnoll tribe will be integrated into the Stoneheart Horde and exempt from cannon fodder duties."

Dirtclaw trembled, tears streaming down his face.

Since being enslaved, he had worked tirelessly to prove his worth, pushing his tribe to the brink to earn recognition.

Now, his efforts had paid off.

"Honorable master, Dirtclaw will fight for the Stoneheart Horde until his last breath!"

This time, Dirtclaw knelt, his voice filled with unwavering loyalty.

Orion nodded and said calmly, "You should thank your master. It was Delilah who spoke on your behalf."

"Remember, do everything she asks of you."

"Now, go."

As Dirtclaw left, Orion fell into deep thought.

Dirtclaw was a test—a model for integrating other races into the Stoneheart Horde.

As the horde grew stronger, more members from different races would join.

How should they be managed?

Dirtclaw was the first step in finding an answer.

By elevating Dirtclaw, Orion hoped to inspire the other gnolls, showing them a path to advancement.

This would motivate the cannon fodder troops to fight harder.

And it wasn't just for the gnolls—this example was also meant for the surviving geckos.

The future Stoneheart Horde would only accept the elite from the cannon fodder troops.

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As Orion's forces continued their journey north, the Black Forest drew closer with each passing day.

Chapter 152 Blood Mushroom

Black Forest, Moonshadow Valley

"Chieftainess, the new batch of prey has been brought in. They're stored in the cave behind the mountain," Earthshaker reported.

Lilith nodded in acknowledgment.

"Elder Earthshaker, any news from the south?"

"None yet, Chieftainess."

Asking about Orion's whereabouts had become part of Lilith's daily routine.

She didn't know how much longer the horde could hold out under her leadership.

The underground worms emerging from the fissure were growing in number, and the defensive battles were becoming more frequent and intense.

"Little Lorelia, your children suffered heavy losses in this battle. Go replenish them."

"Yes, Mistress!"

Lilith patted Spider Queen Lorelia on the shoulder, instructing her to retrieve supplies from the cave where Earthshaker stored the prey.

Lilith was grateful that Orion had left Spider Queen Lorelia under her care before departing. Without the spider queen's assistance, the Stoneheart Horde, now in its vulnerable state, would have suffered catastrophic losses.

"Elder Earthshaker, take some of the tribe and retrieve the burning oils from the warehouse. We cannot let those underground worms break through!"

"Chieftainess, those burning oils were reserved for the dark beast tides this winter. Are you sure we should use them now?"

"Go. I'll take full responsibility for this decision!"

"Understood, Chieftainess!"

Earthshaker didn't argue further and immediately set out to carry out Lilith's orders.

As Orion's slave, Earthshaker had been given a secret task before Orion left: to ensure Lilith's safety at all costs if Moonshadow Valley faced danger.

Earthshaker glanced at Lilith, who stood resolutely at the edge of the underground fissure. His respect for the succubus chieftainess deepened.

"Those damned underground worms... where did they even come from?"

"Orion, hurry back!"

"We can't hold out much longer!"

In recent days, both Earthshaker and Thundar, as well as Lilith herself, had felt an ominous sense of dread.

It was the kind of fear that only arose in the presence of an Alpha-level threat.

This could only mean one thing: an Alpha-level worm had likely emerged from the underground fissure.

None of them dared to voice this suspicion, fearing it would spark panic among the horde.

Thunderwood Forest, Gnoll Tribe

Orion decided to stay here for a day, as Dirtclaw needed time to prepare for the tribe's relocation.

Moving an entire tribe, especially with families in tow, was no small task and required careful planning.

Inside Orion's tent, Delilah lay naked beside him, as passionate and eager as ever.

After their lovemaking, Delilah handed Orion a pouch.

"My dear Orion, these are high-grade magical plants we found in Stormrage City!"

"One of them is something I don't even recognize. It's a blood-red mushroom—I think it's very rare."

Orion reached into the pouch and pulled out the blood-red mushroom Delilah had mentioned.

"Blood Mushroom," said a voice.

It was Violet, the saintess of the Garland Tribe. Her people were skilled in cultivating magical plants, and her knowledge was vast. She immediately recognized the mushroom in Orion's hand.

Orion tightened his arm around Violet, his tone calm as he asked, "Tell me, what does it do?"

Saintess Violet cast a seductive glance at Orion before focusing on the mushroom.

"Master, the Blood Mushroom is incredibly rare. It doesn't enhance attributes or increase elemental affinity."

"However, consuming it triggers a small elemental tide around the body."

"This elemental tide has one major benefit—it increases the chances of advancing to the next level."

Her explanation made Orion's eyes light up with interest.

He glanced at both Violet and Delilah, noticing the desire in their eyes.

After a moment of thought, he handed the Blood Mushroom to Delilah.

"Take it. Try your luck. Maybe you'll advance on the first attempt."

Delilah accepted the mushroom with gratitude, leaning down to kiss Orion's cock in thanks.

As Delilah expressed her appreciation, Orion turned to Violet, a hint of curiosity in his voice.

"You want one too?"

"Yes! The Blood Mushroom is incredibly valuable. It's likely the reason Stormrage City produced three Alpha-level powerhouses."

"But your level hasn't reached a bottleneck yet. What would you do with it?"

"Master, I can cultivate Blood Mushrooms for you!"

Violet's words made Orion tighten his grip around her waist.

Even Delilah, who had been busy with her mouth, paused in shock and stared at Violet.

"Explain. How long would it take to cultivate one?"

Orion kept his tone calm, trying not to reveal his excitement.

"Master, if left to mature naturally, a Blood Mushroom takes at least fifteen years to grow."

Of course, it wasn't going to be that simple.

Orion sighed, feeling a twinge of disappointment.

"However," Violet continued, "there's another way to cultivate them."

"You can use large quantities of beast blood to accelerate their growth. The more blood, the shorter the maturation period."

"If you bury high-grade crystal cores in the cultivation area, the process will speed up even more."

Orion didn't respond immediately. Instead, he pulled Violet into a deep, lingering kiss.

The kiss lasted so long that Violet's face turned red, and she was nearly out of breath when he finally let her go.

"Take this. When you start cultivating Blood Mushrooms, I'll make sure you have all the beast blood you need."

Orion handed Violet one of the mushrooms, placing it gently in her palm.

"Orion, your saintess is full of schemes!" Delilah teased as she leaned closer, joining in on the playful torment of Violet.

Violet's cleverness was undeniable. Though she was a slave, in addition to providing sexual services for Orion, she also took every opportunity to showcase her talents and elevate her status in Orion's esteem.

Cultivating magical plants was her specialty, and she intended to use it to her advantage.

The next morning, a guard reported from outside the tent.

"Chieftain, Elder Dirtclaw requests an audience!"

Dirtclaw, still adjusting to his new title, felt both awkward and proud. Being addressed as "Elder" by the guards made him feel like he had become an important figure.

Soon, Dirtclaw stood before Orion, who was already prepared to move out.

"Honorable Master, the Gnoll Tribe is ready. We can depart at any time!"

Orion nodded. The Gnoll Tribe was a calculated addition to his forces, one he had carefully considered before accepting.

The cannon fodder troops included over 20,000 gnoll bloodline warriors, making them a core part of the army.

The gnoll settlement also housed over 10,000 women and children—non-combatants who represented a valuable resource for the future.

These non-combatants were a renewable asset, ensuring a steady supply of fresh recruits for the cannon fodder troops.

Orion's vision was long-term. He wouldn't exhaust his resources recklessly.

"Dirtclaw, I won't tolerate any mistakes on the road ahead. Do you understand?"

Before Dirtclaw could respond, Orion continued.

"You're the deputy commander of the cannon fodder troops. Keep them in line. If anything goes wrong, you'll answer to me."

"Honorable Master, Dirtclaw will ensure the captives are well-managed. They'll learn to fear my whip!"

"Good. Go."

Black Forest, Moonshadow Valley

Blazing flames formed a fiery barrier, blocking the underground worms from advancing and forcing them back into the depths.

At the edge of the fissure, Lilith stood with a weary expression. Her face was pale, her hair disheveled.

Another day and night of relentless defense had left her utterly exhausted. She alternated between casting illusions and firing arrows, her body pushed to its limits.

"Chieftainess, our burning oils will only last another day!" Thundar reported, his face etched with worry.

The strategic resource was nearly depleted, pushing the Stoneheart Horde closer to the brink.

Moonshadow Valley and Blackstone Town seemed on the verge of falling.

Lilith said nothing, her gaze fixed on the underground fissure as she stood in silence.

No one knew how long she stood there before she finally spoke, her voice calm.

"How is Elder Earthshaker's progress?"

Thundar's spirits lifted slightly at the mention of Earthshaker.

"Chieftainess, the temporary camp is nearly ready. Most of the food and supplies have already been moved there."

"Good."

Lilith wasn't stubborn. She had begun planning for a retreat as soon as she realized the situation was worsening.

With Moonshadow Valley in its vulnerable state, the horde couldn't afford to hold the valley at all costs.

She had instructed Earthshaker to establish a temporary camp at the old succubus settlement as a fallback.

Most of the horde's supplies had already been relocated.

Now, all that remained was to move the people. Once that was done, they could avoid total annihilation.

"Chieftainess, should we begin evacuating the tribe?"

Lilith didn't respond. She wasn't ready to abandon Moonshadow Valley just yet.

Before Orion left, he had entrusted her with protecting their home.

Thundar seemed to sense Lilith's determination. He stood beside her at the edge of the fissure, staring into the endless darkness below.

Chapter 153 My Lilith, I'm back

Zzzzzzz...

The dense, chilling sound of the underground worms resonated once again from the fissure, signaling another assault.

"Quick... quick... to your positions!"

"Pour the burning oils! Light them up! Burn them to death!"

Thundar's voice was hoarse from shouting, but he continued to bellow orders with all his strength.

Soon, the edges of the underground fissure were ablaze once more, the roaring flames engulfing the worms at the forefront of the attack.

However, just as Lilith and Thundar began to breathe a sigh of relief, a wave of Alpha-level pressuresurged from the depths of the fissure, freezing every bloodline warrior of the Stoneheart Horde in place.

"Thundar, go! Evacuate our people! I'll hold them off here!"

Lilith was the first to react. With unwavering resolve, she assigned tasks and chose to stay behind to buy time.

"Chieftainess, you... I..."

Thundar hesitated, torn between his duty and his concern for Lilith.

"Go now! Evacuate the horde members, or it'll be too late!"

Finally, Thundar gritted his teeth, turned, and sprinted toward Moonshadow Valley, shouting orders as he ran.

Lilith drew the dagger Orion had given her and, with all her remaining strength, shouted to the warriors:

"Stand up, my people! Buy time for our families to escape!"

"When the burning oils run out, push all the boulders down and crush these disgusting worms!"

"For our families, for Moonshadow Valley, for Blackstone Town—hold the line!"

Lilith's rallying cry reignited the bloodline warriors' fighting spirit.

Yes!

Their families were still in Moonshadow Valley, and they needed time to evacuate.

"Hold them off!"

"It's the only way our families will survive!"

One by one, the bloodline warriors forced themselves to their feet, defying the crushing Alpha-level pressure.

Lilith's leadership shone brightly. As she shouted, she unleashed her illusions, bolstering the warriors' morale and giving them the courage to face the swarm.

But then, from the depths of the fissure, a massive Alpha-level terrifying spiked worm emerged, its body covered in sharp, menacing spikes. It pushed through the flames, its enormous form rising slowly.

The moment its four uneven, green eyes scanned the warriors, it was as if death itself had arrived.

A wave of terror swept through the horde.

This was the end.

Lilith finally understood the horror Orion had once described.

Despair gripped the hearts of the bloodline warriors as they watched the terrifying spiked worm and the countless underground worms crawling out of the fissure behind it.

It was a nightmare made real.

Lilith tightened her grip on her dagger, her gaze fixed on the terrifying spiked worm. She wasn't afraid — only regretful.

"My dear Orion, my husband... I'm afraid I won't be able to walk this path with you any longer."

SCREEEEEE!

A piercing eagle's cry tore through the air, sharp and high-pitched, as if it could rip through the very souls of those who heard it.

At the same time, a streak of lightning and a flaming trident shot down from the sky.

BOOM!

The lightning and trident struck the terrifying spiked worm in quick succession, blasting it back into the underground fissure.

Every bloodline warrior looked up, their eyes wide with disbelief.

"That... that's a thunderhawk!"

"It's Chieftain Orion!"

"And Rendall!"

"...!"

The warriors with sharp eyesight quickly recognized the figures on the thunderhawk's back—Orion and Rendall.

Lilith, staring at the massive shadow in the sky and the familiar figure atop it, collapsed to her knees, her strength finally giving out.

"You little brats, what are you standing around for?"

"Push those boulders down and crush these damned worms!"

Rendall's booming voice snapped the bloodline warriors out of their daze.

"The chieftain is back!"

"Rendall is back too!"

"We're saved!"

"...!"

Joy spread like wildfire among the warriors. Their morale, which had hit rock bottom, soared once more.

When Lilith opened her eyes again, the first thing she saw was Orion's strong, chiseled face.

"My Lilith, I'm back."

"Orion..."

Lilith threw her arms around him, holding him tightly and saying nothing.

To her, this felt like a dream.

Not long ago, she had believed she would never see him again.

"One day ago, we returned to the Black Forest and met Samson at the border. He told us everything."

"So Rendall and I rushed back as quickly as we could."

"You've worked hard, Lilith."

Orion gently patted her back, about to say more when a crisp, childlike voice interrupted him from behind.

"Master, little Lorelia worked hard too!"

Orion turned to see the now-grown Spider Queen Lorelia. He reached out and lightly patted her head.

"You did well. I'll reward you later."

Orion released Lilith and took a closer look at Lorelia. She now bore a striking resemblance to the spider queen she had once been.

"Keep watch here. Rendall and I are going down to see what's happening below."

Lilith nodded softly, regaining her composure.

"If anything happens, ask that guy up there for help," Orion said, pointing to the thunderhawk circling overhead.

"And remember to reward it with a bottle of Pet Pills before asking for anything."

The thunderhawk let out a sharp cry, as if in agreement.

"An Alpha-level flying beast?" Lilith asked, surprised.

Orion didn't respond to her astonishment. What caught his attention was how the underground worms retreated even faster after the thunderhawk's cry.

"Hmm... are they afraid?"

"Worms... and eagles... interesting."

Orion gripped his trident and motioned for Rendall to follow him as they descended along the fissure's rocky walls.

"Guard this place well. Don't let a single worm climb up and scare the horde members!"

Rendall gave a final order to the warriors before slinging a bundle of spears over his back and following Orion down.

It took only half an hour for Orion and Rendall to reach the bottom of the fissure.

The underground landscape had changed significantly since Orion's last exploration.

The ground was now covered in a strange, leathery substance. Orion guessed it was the shed skin of the underground worms.

"Elder, stay alert. These creatures are masters of stealth."

"Don't worry, I understand."

Orion led the way, heading toward the bottomless abyss deeper within the fissure.

But after only twenty meters, the eerie sound of worm chirping—Zzzzzzz...—echoed around them.

Orion stopped in his tracks, and Rendall's expression grew tense.

"Elder, guard one side. Don't turn your back."

"That thing is fast."

Rendall nodded, gripping his spiked club tightly as he scanned the surrounding boulders with vigilance.

The aftermath of previous battles had left the area littered with rocks, providing perfect cover for the terrifying spiked worm to hide.

Chapter 154 Let's finish this

Rustle... rustle...

The sound of countless bodies scraping against stone filled the air, accompanied by the incessant squeaking of the underground worms.

Suddenly, from behind the surrounding boulders, a swarm of underground worms emerged, surging toward Orion and Rendall.

"Ha!"

Rendall let out a thunderous roar, swinging his spiked club in a wide arc. The worms were smashed apart with ease.

Orion, wielding his trident, swiftly dealt with the worms that Rendall missed, killing them one by one.

All the while, Orion remained vigilant, his eyes scanning the area. He was on high alert, wary of the massive terrifying spiked worm launching a surprise attack.

Rendall, too, was prepared for anything.

Roar!

A familiar, guttural roar echoed from behind one of the boulders. Orion's sharp gaze locked onto the source just as the terrifying spiked worm raised its grotesque head.

"So, it's you again!"

"What's down in that bottomless abyss? Not only did it survive the fall, but its strength has even increased?"

Orion's mind raced with questions. The terrifying spiked worm before him was the same one he had previously blasted into the abyss.

However, judging by its current state, it had clearly sustained significant injuries. It seemed that Orion and the thunderhawk's earlier ambush had been effective.

"Elder, don't let it get too close!"

"And watch out—its spikes can be launched as projectiles!"

As soon as Orion finished speaking, a sharp whooshing sound filled the air. Eight spikes shot out in a tight formation, hurtling toward Orion and Rendall.

Rendall reacted quickly, swinging his spiked club to deflect the incoming projectiles.

"Be careful, Elder!"

"If you get close, aim for its waist!"

Orion had noticed that the terrifying spiked worm's waist was severely injured, with most of the spikes in that area broken. It was likely a wound from their earlier ambush.

Orion kicked away a two-meter-long worm, leaping onto a nearby boulder to gain a better vantage point.

Whoosh!

Activating Titan's Rage, Orion's attributes doubled as he hurled his trident with all his might.

Thud!

The trident pierced deep into the terrifying spiked worm's body, eliciting a series of agonized screeches.

The worm roared at Orion before retreating behind the boulders, disappearing from sight once more.

Rustle... rustle...

The sound of the worm slithering between the rocks echoed ominously.

While Rendall continued smashing the smaller worms with his spiked club, the terrifying spiked worm suddenly lunged out from behind a boulder on the left, its massive jaws snapping toward him.

Rendall, having anticipated the attack, swung his spiked club in a wide arc, aiming directly at the worm's head.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

At the same time, Orion hurled three spears in rapid succession, each one aimed at the worm's gaping maw.

Boom!

Thud! Thud! Thud!

The combined assault severely injured the terrifying spiked worm. Orion and Rendall had seized the perfect opportunity to strike.

Rendall followed up with another swing of his spiked club, spinning his body to deliver a powerful blow to the worm's injured waist.

Meanwhile, Orion advanced, throwing more spears as he closed the distance. Each spear struck true, causing the worm to writhe in pain and curl into a defensive ball.

The worm's curled posture significantly increased its defense. Two of Orion's spears were deflected by the spikes on its back.

Even so, the worm was clearly struggling.

Rendall's strike to its waist had nearly severed it, leaving the creature in a dire state.

Orion switched to his newly acquired trident and moved in for the kill.

But just as he approached, the worm suddenly uncurled, its massive, spike-filled maw lunging at him.

"Damn it! It was faking its injuries!"

That was Orion's first thought, but it was already too late to dodge.

As the worm's jaws closed in, a flash of blood-red light erupted from Orion's chest. The Abyssal dragon's fearsome maw materialized from the light, intercepting the worm's attack.

Roar!

The dragon and the worm locked jaws, biting and tearing at each other. Orion used the opportunity to leap back, putting some distance between himself and the creature.

Once he steadied himself, Orion's eyes burned with killing intent. He charged forward again, activating Swift Charge to close the gap in an instant.

With a powerful thrust, he drove his trident into the worm's head.

In the next moment, flames erupted from the worm's head, spreading rapidly across its entire body.

The terrifying spiked worm had been ignited by the Flame of Will's special effect.

"Fall back!"

Orion, Rendall, and the Abyssal dragon quickly retreated.

However, the dragon found itself in trouble—the worm had clamped its jaws onto the dragon's mouth and refused to let go.

With no other choice, Orion recalled the Abyssal dragon, which dissolved into a streak of red light and returned to his heart.

Just as Orion began to relax, he noticed countless smaller worms crawling out from the surrounding cracks, swarming over the spiked worm's burning body in an attempt to extinguish the flames.

To his shock, some of the worms burrowed into the terrifying spiked worm's wounds, seemingly repairing its injuries from the inside.

This bizarre and horrifying sight left both Orion and Rendall stunned.

"Is this thing unkillable?"

"It can heal itself by consuming its own kind?"

Orion's mind raced as he watched the scene unfold. Without hesitation, he summoned the Abyssal dragon once more.

"Abyssal Flame Bomb!"

At Orion's command, the dragon began charging its attack.

Meanwhile, Orion retrieved several spears from his birdbag and hurled them with all his strength.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Three consecutive Abyssal Flame Bombs exploded, filling the fissure with smoke and fire. The terrifying spiked worm let out a series of anguished screeches.

But when the smoke cleared, the worm was still alive, its body writhing in defiance.

"Let's finish this!"

Orion, Rendall, and the Abyssal dragon charged forward together, determined to end the fight.

The remaining smaller worms, driven mad, swarmed toward the terrifying spiked worm in a desperate attempt to protect it.

"Abyssal dragon, eat it!"

Orion came up with a bold plan. The worm's seemingly endless vitality made consuming it the best option.

The Abyssal dragon lunged forward, sinking its teeth into the worm's head and tearing it off in one swift motion.

Crunch! Crunch!

The dragon chewed a few times, reducing the worm's head to pulp.

Orion noticed that the worm's heart was still beating. Without hesitation, he drove his trident into its chest.

Fwoosh!

Flames erupted once more, consuming the worm's body.

Orion pulled back his trident and signaled Rendall and the dragon to retreat.

As he withdrew his weapon, something came loose—a black, crystal-like object.

"Is this... a dark source crystal?"

The dark source crystal, extracted from the worm's body, seemed to be the key to its vitality. Without it, the worm's body went limp, its movements ceasing entirely.

The flames continued to spread, igniting the smaller worms that had gathered around the terrifying spiked worm.

Orion stood at the edge of the underground fissure, watching the inferno rage below. The acrid smell of burning flesh filled the air, and for the first time in hours, his tense nerves began to relax.

Chapter 155 Horde restricted zone

"Is this thing a dark creature?"

Orion stared at the dark source crystal in his hand, his expression filled with surprise and doubt.

He had always assumed the terrifying spiked worm was just an underground beast, but now it seemed it was actually a creature from the dark beast tides.

Narrowing his eyes, Orion began to recall everything he knew about the terrifying spiked worm.

"That's right. When I first explored the underground fissure, it was during the dark beast tides!"

"Which means this thing must have been left behind from the last dark beast tides!"

Orion's eyes brightened with realization, but new questions began to surface in his mind.

"So, where did the terrifying spiked worm hide to survive the retreat of the dark beast tides?"

"Could it be... the bottomless abyss?"

The thought struck him like lightning, and the more he considered it, the more plausible it seemed.

"What exactly lies beneath the bottomless abyss?"

Orion's curiosity burned, but now wasn't the time to dwell on it.

"Orion, most of the worms are dead, but a few managed to burrow into the cracks around us!"

Although the terrifying spiked worm had been killed, Rendall's expression remained grim.

Those remaining underground worms, if left unchecked, could one day evolve into another terrifying spiked worm. It was a problem that couldn't be ignored.

"Don't worry. I'll have little Lorelia send her spiderlings to flush them out and finish them off."

Hearing Orion's plan, Rendall's mood eased slightly.

Just as Rendall was about to speak again, a faint rustling sound echoed from the fissure walls on both sides.

"More enemies?"

"No, it's little Lorelia's spiderlings," Orion said, calming Rendall's nerves.

Moments later, Spider Queen Lorelia herself descended along the stone walls.

"Master, are all the terrifying worms dead?"

Orion pointed to the smoldering remains of the terrifying spiked worm on the ground, signaling for Lorelia to see for herself.

"Ah... what a pity!"

"Master, do you know? These worms would've been the perfect food for my children!"

"If they ate these worms, they might grow even stronger!"

Spider Queen Lorelia sighed as she looked at the charred corpses scattered across the ground.

"There are still some alive in the cracks. They're yours to deal with. Make sure to flush them all out and kill them!"

Lorelia's eyes lit up with excitement at Orion's words.

"As you wish, Master! Little Lorelia will handle this beautifully!"

"Did Lilith send you down here?"

"Yes, Master. Mistress was worried about you and asked me to check on you."

Orion nodded, then turned to Rendall.

"Elder, stay here and keep watch for a while. I'm going to explore further ahead."

"Understood, Orion. Be careful!"

Orion nodded and began walking toward the direction of the bottomless abyss.

As he moved forward, the traces of worms crawling across the ground became increasingly evident.

It was clear that both the underground worms and the terrifying spiked worm had emerged from the bottomless abyss.

Standing at the edge of the cliff, Orion gazed into the darkness below. A decision formed in his mind: this place would become a restricted zone for the horde, designated as a breeding ground.

Yes, after careful consideration, Orion decided to incorporate the underground fissure into the territory of Blackstone Town, transforming it into a breeding ground for cave spiders.

Not only would he build walls around the area, but he would also establish it as Spider Queen Lorelia's domain, allowing her to breed countless cave spiders.

By using spiders to control the worms, Orion could ensure that any creatures emerging from the bottomless abyss would be detected immediately.

"Orion, is this the bottomless abyss you mentioned?"

"Yes, this is it."

Orion turned to see Rendall, who had quietly approached from behind.

"Most of the underground worms have been flushed out and killed. The rest are still being hunted down."

"Thundar brought a team of bloodline warriors down here, so the other side doesn't need me to stand guard anymore," Rendall explained.

Orion nodded, then decided to share his thoughts.

"Elder, this place will be designated as a restricted zone for the horde."

"The terrifying spiked worm you saw earlier. I knocked it into this abyss before, but not only did it survive, it came back stronger."

"I suspect there's an underground world down there—or perhaps it connects to some unknown space."

"Whatever the case, it's beyond our current ability to explore. For now, we need to isolate this area."

Rendall frowned deeply. He had lived in Moonshadow Valley for many years but had never imagined such a secret lay beneath it.

"Orion, the secrets of this place..."

"Will only be known to Alpha-level powerhouses. In fact, this area will be designated as a rotation point for Alpha-level guards."

"It has to be this way."

Hearing Orion's plan, Rendall finally felt reassured.

"We were lucky to return in time. If we hadn't, the horde would've suffered catastrophic losses!"

Orion smiled faintly, nodding before shaking his head.

"Before we landed, I saw that part of the horde had already been evacuated."

"Lilith and the others had prepared a fallback plan."

"Still, the sudden appearance of the terrifying spiked worm... if we hadn't shown up, the bloodline warriors left behind would've been wiped out."

Rendall nodded, still shaken by the thought.

"Orion, from now on, I'll stay behind in Moonshadow Valley. We can't leave it completely unguarded again."

"I was thinking the same thing."

Orion understood Rendall's point. The horde needed someone to stay behind and oversee its safety.

During the Myriad Races Invasion, Orion had taken all the Alpha-level powerhouses with him.

There were many reasons for this, but one of the main ones was Orion's own fear of death.

If Orion were to die, the Stoneheart Horde's fate and glory would die with him.

Orion and the Stoneheart Horde were deeply intertwined. At least, that's how Orion saw it for now.

"In the future, during the Myriad Races Invasion, either you or the prophet will stay behind. No matter what."

"That way, I can march into battle without worrying about what's left behind."

Rendall nodded, fully agreeing with Orion's plan.

"Good. This time, I've learned a lot from venturing out."

"Orion, compared to the other races out there, I think our giant tribe's population is far too small."

"From now on, I'll push our people to have more children. I'll teach them powerful combat techniques and hunting skills."

"And you, Orion—you don't have enough women in your tent!"

"..."

Rendall's chatter brought a rare sense of warmth to Orion, a feeling he hadn't experienced in a long time.

Putting aside his thoughts, Orion walked back to the other side of the underground fissure with Rendall.

"Chieftain!"

"Prophet!"

Thundar, who had been busy evacuating the horde members, greeted them as they returned.

Orion placed a hand on Thundar's shoulder and said calmly, "You've worked hard."

Thundar shook his head. "Not at all, Chieftain."

"Are the worms cleared out?" Orion asked, quickly shifting the conversation to the matter at hand.

"All the worms we found have been dealt with. The spiderlings are still searching the cracks, and we should have results soon."

Orion nodded and said no more. Instead, he walked over to Spider Queen Lorelia.

"How's the environment here? Is it suitable for your cave spiders?"

Lorelia, shorter than Orion, stretched out her arms, trying to hug him like she used to when she was smaller, wanting to climb onto him.

"You've grown up now. No more clinging to me like a child," Orion said, pressing a hand against her head to stop her from climbing onto him.

"Master, do you not like me anymore?"

Orion didn't answer her question. Instead, he pointed toward the underground fissure.

"Do you like it here? I'm planning to designate this place as the nesting ground for your cave spider clan."

"Really, Master? Are you serious?"

"Yes, it's true. This will be your territory from now on."

"Wow, cool! Master, little Lorelia finally has a home that isn't that tiny wooden box!"

Orion sighed, speechless. Lorelia still hadn't forgotten the small wooden box she had been kept in as a child.

"This will be your domain, but you must clear out all the underground worms."

"And from now on, no other species will be allowed to settle here—only your kind."

Lorelia's excitement grew as she listened. The underground fissure was an ideal environment for cave spiders.

The vast expanse of the fissure was a natural, massive underground lair. With a bit of work to reshape the cracks and boulders, it would become the perfect breeding ground for her spiders.

"Master, you're so good to me!"

Once again, Lorelia tried to climb onto Orion, but he stopped her and instead took her hand, leading her toward the bottomless abyss.

A moment later, Orion pointed toward the abyss.

"That terrifying spiked worm—I knocked it down there before, but it climbed back up."

"I suspect there's another world or space down there, but we're not ready to explore it yet."

"I'm giving you a task: guard this place and send your spiderlings down to scout regularly."

"If you find anything, report to me immediately."

Lorelia stared into the abyss, her gaze uncertain.

"Master, do you know how deep this abyss is?"

Orion shook his head, picked up a large rock, and tossed it into the darkness below.

After a long silence, Orion turned to Lorelia and said, "See? No sound, no reaction. That's why it's called a bottomless abyss."

A flicker of fear appeared in Lorelia's eyes. She was clearly unsettled.

"Don't be afraid. I'll assign Alpha-level powerhouses to patrol here regularly and assist you in guarding this place."

Hearing this, Lorelia finally relaxed. Her fear had stemmed from the possibility of another Alpha-level creature crawling out of the abyss. If that happened, this wouldn't be a home for spiders—it would be their grave.

"Grow stronger as quickly as you can. I want to take you with me on the next Myriad Races Invasion."

"Master, can little Lorelia really do that?"

"You can. Work hard. If you reach the peak of hero-level by this winter, I'll prioritize your advancement to Alpha-level."

"M-Master, you're not lying to little Lorelia, are you?"

Orion gently patted her head, just as he used to when she was smaller, and gave her a light tap.

"When have I ever lied to you?"

"Remember, the more children you have, the better. I'll make sure you have plenty of food."

"I want you to be able to guard this bottomless abyss on your own one day."

"Not just guard it—explore the world below for me."

To be honest, Orion was painting a grand vision for Lorelia, setting ambitious goals for her.

Lay eggs, grow stronger, advance to Alpha-level, guard the underground fissure, and explore the bottomless abyss—these were the long-term objectives Orion had laid out for her.

"Once we leave, have your spiderlings block off this path and narrow the entrance."

"Your mission begins now."

Orion's expression was serious, and his tone was firm.

"As you command, Master!"

Afterward, Orion gave Thundar a few tasks, instructing him to stay until everything was settled before returning to Moonshadow Valley.

Rendall, still uneasy, insisted on staying with Thundar.

Orion didn't object and began climbing back up with the two giants.

When Orion returned to the stone walls of Moonshadow Valley, Lilith was still waiting for him.

This time, however, she wasn't alone. Standing beside her was Lysinthia, whom Orion hadn't seen in a long time.

Although Lysinthia hadn't participated in the battle, she had been busy.

With the Twilight Viper as her guardian beast, Lysinthia had been helping Earthshaker transport supplies to the temporary camp.

When the horde members began evacuating, she used the Twilight Viper to escort the women and children to safety.

She had repeated this task multiple times until news of Orion and Rendall's return reached her. Only then did she finally stop.

"You've worked hard," Orion said as he approached, wrapping his arms around the two women who had been tirelessly protecting the horde.

"The terrifying spiked worm is dead. The major threat has been dealt with. Rendall is guarding the fissure now, so you can rest."

Lilith nodded. Orion's return meant she could finally relax.

"Chieftain, the horde members heard you've returned. They've stopped heading to the temporary camp and are rushing back here instead," Earthshaker reported as he approached, bowing deeply before speaking.

"It's fine. Let them come back."

"As for the supplies, they can be transported back slowly."

"Earthshaker, I have two tasks for you."

Earthshaker straightened his posture, looking ready for anything, which made Orion chuckle.

It was clear Earthshaker was still a bit resentful about not being taken on the Myriad Races Invasion campaign.

"First, organize a team of Obsidian Golems to carve out a passage between the underground fissure and Moonshadow Valley."

"Second, clear the remaining open spaces in Blackstone Town to prepare for the arrival of the force."

"Our force numbers over 50,000!"

Chapter 156 Patrol the Black Forest

The next morning, Orion stepped out of his tent, leaving Lilith and Lysinthia still resting inside. The previous night had been filled with passion, and the two women were utterly exhausted.

Lilith, in particular, felt that the intense lovemaking had drained her more than the recent battles defending against the worms. Yet, she relished the feeling.

As Orion strolled through Moonshadow Valley, the peaceful atmosphere lifted his spirits.

"We're really back," he murmured to himself.

With the main force still on its way and no guards accompanying him, Orion felt a rare sense of freedom.

Walking out of Moonshadow Valley, every horde member he passed bowed their heads in greeting.

Orion returned their gestures with a smile, and before he knew it, he had arrived at the southern gate and climbed up onto the wall.

"Chieftain!"

Thundar approached, his expression showing signs of fatigue.

"You didn't rest last night?" Orion asked.

Thundar nodded and led Orion into a room on the wall.

"I was busy all night. I couldn't sleep, so I decided to stand watch here instead."

Orion studied Thundar for a moment. His strength had reached the peak of hero-level, and his aura had become much steadier.

"Make sure to rest. The horde still needs you for many things."

"Don't worry, Earthshaker will be here soon to take over for me."

Orion nodded and stepped out of the room.

"Walk with me. Tell me everything that's happened in the horde since I left."

"Of course, Chieftain."

Since Orion had left for the southern invasion, the Stoneheart Horde seemed unchanged on the surface. But beneath that calm exterior, many things had quietly shifted.

As they walked and talked, Thundar explained the changes in detail.

Two hours later, the two of them reached the eastern ridge. By then, Thundar had given Orion a thorough update, leaving him with a clear understanding of the horde's current state.

"Are the worms below completely cleared out?"

"Since the second half of the night, there's been no sign of them. However, the Spider Queen is still conducting searches, though at a slower pace."

Orion didn't respond. The remaining worms were few in number, and Lorelia could handle them on her own.

"You should rest. I'm going to patrol the Black Forest."

"Patrol the Black Forest?"

"Yes."

Thundar was puzzled. It made sense for Orion to patrol Moonshadow Valley or Blackstone Town, but why the Black Forest?

His confusion was answered when the sharp cry of a thunderhawk echoed across the sky.

A massive shadow swooped down, and Orion climbed onto the wall. With a single leap, he landed steadily on the thunderhawk's back.

"Tell Rendall I'll be back in three days at most!"

The wind roared as the thunderhawk took off, ruffling Thundar's hair.

For a moment, Thundar's heart raced.

That's a thunderhawk!

An Alpha-level flying beast!

In that moment, Thundar felt an overwhelming desire to soar into the skies alongside Orion, to explore the land that had nurtured them.

But he couldn't.

"Alpha-level... I'll reach it one day! I want to see the world beyond!"

For the first time, Thundar felt an intense yearning—not just for strength, but for the freedom to venture out.

For Orion, this was his first time viewing the Black Forest from above.

From the sky, Moonshadow Valley and Blackstone Town looked like miniature cities made of building blocks, a sight that amused him.

As he shifted his gaze, the vast expanse of the world unfolded before him. The clear skies, endless clouds, and the constant rush of wind filled him with a profound sense of awe.

Looking down, he saw mountains, forests, beasts, birds, lakes, and rivers—all of it stirring his soul with a sense of boundless grandeur.

Starting from the east, Orion followed the Barren Mountains, where the trolls resided, and patrolled northward.

The Barren Mountains were vast, serving as the natural border between the Black Forest and the Poison Dragon Swamp. The environment here was unique and harsh.

"Should I subdue the trolls now?"

Orion spotted a group of trolls hunting in the mountains, and the thought of bringing them under his control crossed his mind.

But he quickly dismissed the idea. The timing wasn't right.

After crossing the Barren Mountains, he reached a region where forests and swamps intertwined—a place he had never visited before. It piqued his curiosity.

Further east lay the Abyssal Chasm, Lord Gareth's stronghold. Orion had no desire to explore that area.

Heading west, the northwestern region was still part of the Abyssal Chasm's territory and held little interest for him.

It wasn't until he reached the western region that he saw the desert ruled by the Scorpion Queen, Soraya.

Orion lingered over the desert for a while but didn't venture deeper.

Finally, heading south, he reached the edge of Thunderwood Forest before beginning his return journey.

The entire patrol took Orion over two days, giving him a clear understanding of the Black Forest he ruled.

At the same time, he gained a better sense of the neighboring territories and their rulers.

"Remember, this forest is my domain. From now on, it's also your hunting ground," Orion said, patting the thunderhawk's back.

The thunderhawk let out an excited cry, clearly pleased.

"Alright, let's head back."

The thunderhawk flapped its wings and turned toward Moonshadow Valley.

On the way back, Orion spotted the returning main force.

Judging by their pace, it would take another six or seven days for them to reach Moonshadow Valley.

SCREEEEEE!

The thunderhawk swooped low over the main force, letting out a sharp cry.

"Is that the chieftain's thunderhawk?"

In the dense forest below, Delilah looked up, her gaze following the distant thunderhawk.

"It is. I even saw the chieftain himself. He smiled and nodded at us," said Prophet Onyx, who had a clear view from his elevated position. "He must have sensed your aura, which is why he came down to greet us. Looks like your plan to surprise him has failed,"

Delilah's eyes sparkling with the joy of her recent advancement.

Two days earlier, Delilah had successfully advanced to Alpha-level, using the elemental tide triggered by the Blood Mushroom.

She had planned to surprise Orion with her breakthrough, but he had spotted her from above, ruining the surprise.

"The chieftain's return means the crisis in Moonshadow Valley has been resolved," Onyx said.

Delilah nodded in agreement. With Orion, Rendall, the Abyssal dragon, and the thunderhawk all back in Moonshadow Valley, any major threat would have been dealt with swiftly.

"Prophet, to be honest, I still feel more at home in the Black Forest," Delilah said, her gaze sweeping over the familiar landscape.

"Even though the south has more resources and diverse races, we grew up here. It's where our roots are."

Prophet Onyx looked out over the Black Forest, his eyes lingering on the Obsidian Golem's old gathering grounds and the mountain they once called home.

"Those words... I've heard them before, centuries ago."

Seven days later, Orion and Rendall led the horde members out of Moonshadow Valley to welcome the returning Invasion force.

Of course, the primary reason for this was the tens of thousands of cannon fodder troops, who needed to be properly managed.

The convoy moved slowly, not just because of its size but also due to the massive amount of loot it was transporting.

The spoils of war were immense—resources from the Gnoll Tribe, Thunderhawk City, Half-Moon Island, and even half of Stormrage City had been plundered clean.

The sheer scale of the convoy and its cargo left the members of Moonshadow Valley in awe.

Children and elders alike ran out of the city to watch the spectacle.

"Mom, look! Is that a gnoll from your stories?"

"Look over there! Those are geckos!"

"Elder, are those all captives brought back by the chieftain?"

"So many slaves!"

The crowd buzzed with curiosity and amazement.

Standing alongside Orion and Rendall to greet the returning force were Lilith, Lysinthia, Thundar, Earthshaker, and other elders.

When they saw Delilah, now radiating the aura of an Alpha-level powerhouse, their faces were filled with shock.

"Alpha-level!"

"The Stewardship Elder has advanced to Alpha-level?"

"Sister... you..."

Even Orion was a little surprised.

When he had given Delilah the Blood Mushroom, it was partly because she had found it herself and partly to comfort her after her previous failed advancement attempt.

He hadn't expected her to succeed so quickly.

"Rendall, I've already cleared out the southeastern area. Move the cannon fodder troops there," Orion instructed.

As the commander of the cannon fodder troops, this task naturally fell to Rendall.

"Delilah, relocate Dirtclaw's tribe to the western area. You'll handle this."

"As you wish, my dear chieftain!"

As the Stewardship Elder, Delilah was the most suitable person for the job.

Besides, Dirtclaw was her slave—who else would handle it if not her?

Dirtclaw was overwhelmed with emotion. His tribe and family were being treated differently from the other gnolls.

His branch of the gnoll tribe was not comparable to the cannon fodder gnolls.

"After lunch, we'll hold a council meeting!"

After assigning Thundar and Earthshaker to help organize the supplies, Orion returned to Moonshadow Valley.

Orion wasn't the only one with tasks to handle—everyone had their responsibilities.

"This is Violet, the saintess of the Garland Tribe. She specializes in cultivating magical plants and enchantments. She's also... my woman."

Orion felt a bit awkward introducing Violet to Lilith. There was a faint sense of guilt, as if he had done something wrong.

Lilith smiled warmly, taking Violet's hands in hers. Her expression was kind, though her tone carried a hint of teasing.

"My dear Orion, I can sense that she's... different."

Orion nodded, signaling Violet to drop the enchantment concealing her appearance.

When Violet revealed her true face, both Lilith and Lysinthia were momentarily stunned.

"Wow... she's truly beautiful. And her figure is amazing!"

"No wonder my Orion couldn't resist. Welcome to our family!"

Even Lilith, who was used to seeing beauty, was briefly taken aback by Violet's ethereal appearance.

Lilith quickly recovered, maintaining her warm and welcoming demeanor. She showed no signs of jealousy or arrogance, treating Violet with genuine kindness.

Lysinthia, however, reacted differently.

Bound to Orion by a slave contract, Lysinthia could sense the nature of Violet's relationship with him.

She understood that Violet's status was equal to her own.

Despite Violet's beauty and otherworldly charm, Lysinthia felt no interest in her. Instead, a faint sense of hostility began to brew.

Seeing the subtle dynamics between the women, Orion felt out of place in his own tent.

"You all chat. I'm going to check on Rendall."

With that, Orion made a quick escape, leaving Lilith to handle the situation.

Outside the tent, Orion didn't head toward the cannon fodder troops. Instead, he went to the chieftain's tent.

The chieftain's tent now served two purposes: one as Orion's personal residence and the other as a place for military discussions.

This division had been made a few days ago, as the growing strength of the horde had led to an increase in council members.

Currently, the council consisted of the four main elders and seventy regular elders.

Once the war achievements from the Myriad Races Invasion were tallied, many more members would likely qualify for promotion to elder status.

"Chieftain, you're here!"

The first to arrive was Prophet Onyx. Orion greeted him and gestured for him to take a seat.

Over the next fifteen minutes, the four main elders—Rendall, Prophet Onyx, Delilah, and Thundar—arrived one after another.

"Dace, go inform the other elders that the council meeting has been postponed by two hours."

Orion scanned the four main elders, deciding it was best to discuss a few matters with them first.

"I have three things to discuss. Think them over and let me know if there are any flaws or areas for improvement."

"First: the council is growing in size. I plan to restructure it, similar to how we've organized the cannon fodder troops, by introducing ranks and classifications for the elders."

"I want to select eight council elders from the group, granting them the authority to participate in the horde's most important meetings."

"Many hands make light work. Collective wisdom is essential."

Orion's tone was firm, making it clear that this reform was non-negotiable.

"Second: the number of bloodline warriors in the horde is steadily increasing, and it will only grow further. We need a dedicated military base."

"I've decided to designate Moonshadow Valley as the Stoneheart Horde's military base."

"All members of the giant tribe will be relocated to the northern area of Blackstone Town."

Orion directed this statement toward Rendall, knowing that he would likely face the greatest resistance from him.

The Stoneheart Horde needed a proper military base to ensure the professionalism, discipline, and unity of its warriors.

Currently, all other races lived in Blackstone Town, while the giants remained in Moonshadow Valley. Over time, this separation could lead to internal divisions and resentment.

Orion wanted to address this potential issue before it became a problem.

He also understood the deep emotional attachment the giants had to Moonshadow Valley.

This would undoubtedly be a difficult transition, but it was a necessary step toward fostering unity among the horde's diverse members.

"Of course, I'm not exempt from this change."

"My personal chieftain's tent will also be relocated—one near the southern gate of Blackstone Town, where I'll stand alongside everyone to defend the horde."

"The other will be in the northern residential area, close to Moonshadow Valley, serving as the new home for the giants."

"From now on, Moonshadow Valley will be a military base, accessible only to the horde's official bloodline warriors."

Chapter 157 Council meeting

Rendall frowned, hesitating several times, but ultimately kept his thoughts to himself.

After Orion finished speaking, Rendall finally sighed and tried to reason with him.

"Orion, can't we relocate the military base to another location?"

Orion shook his head and looked at Rendall with a firm expression.

"Elder, the giant tribe must leave Moonshadow Valley. This isn't just about securing the horde's future—it's about ensuring the safety of our people."

"The underground fissure will eventually connect to Moonshadow Valley, creating a passage. The tribe has no choice but to evacuate."

As soon as Orion said this, Rendall's mind immediately conjured images of the subterranean worms and the terrifying spiked worm crawling out of the underground fissure. His heartbeat quickened at the thought.

If more monsters emerged from the bottomless abyss, the consequences would be unimaginable.

"Fine, I agree to the relocation!"

Orion nodded with a faint smile. If Rendall could be convinced, persuading the rest of the tribe would be much easier.

"Now, for the third matter—I plan to rename Blackstone Town to Blackstone City."

This announcement left the four senior elders puzzled. They couldn't quite understand why Orion would bother with such a change. Was there some deeper significance?

"During this southern campaign, including the cannon fodder troops, we brought back over fifty thousand people."

"Adding our own population of over twenty thousand, the Stoneheart Horde has grown significantly."

"This year, we've gained fifty thousand. And in the future? That number will only increase!"

"The original layout of Blackstone Town is now too small."

"I've decided to expand Blackstone Town and officially rename it Blackstone City."

"In the coming years, we'll construct city walls around Blackstone City, enclosing the entire area surrounding Moonshadow Valley."

Orion's words were bold and ambitious, delivered with a commanding presence. His vision for the future was clear and inspiring.

Rendall, Prophet Onyx, and Delilah all gazed at Orion, fully aware that he wasn't joking. Blackstone City was destined to grow stronger.

After all, the Stoneheart Horde now boasted four Alpha-level members.

Orion refocused his attention on the four senior elders. When his gaze landed on Thundar, he suddenly remembered something.

"Thundar, there's something I need to discuss with you."

"Chieftain, I'm listening!"

Orion glanced at the other three elders, who were now looking at him curiously. He softened his tone slightly.

"Your strength has reached its peak, and you've entered the sequence for receiving Alpha-level resources."

"According to the rules, from now on, any Alpha-level resources we acquire will be allocated to you."

Thundar looked confused. Wasn't Lilith next in line? Why was it suddenly him?

"Could it be...?"

Before Thundar could finish his thought, Orion confirmed it.

"Lilith's share of the resources has already been prepared."

Orion pulled out a wooden box from his coat and spoke without reservation.

"The resources inside were contributed by that terrifying spiked worm."

Orion didn't mention that the box contained dark source crystals. He believed it was better to keep that secret to as few people as possible.

"Chieftain, what does this have to do with me?" Thundar asked, still puzzled.

Orion shook his head, then nodded slightly.

"Until Lorelia reaches the peak of the Hero level, any Alpha-level resources the horde acquires will be prioritized for you."

"If, by then, Lorelia also reaches the Hero peak, the resources will go to her first."

Raising the Spider Queen was an urgent matter, and Orion had to handle it with care.

"If the Spider Queen were already at the Hero peak, I wouldn't have given these resources to Lilith either. Do you understand what I mean?"

Hearing this, Thundar's previously downcast expression brightened.

Thundar wasn't afraid of being treated differently; he was only worried about being excluded from receiving Alpha-level resources.

"I support the chieftain's decision!"

"So do I!"

"I agree!"

Prophet Onyx, Rendall, and Delilah, the three Alpha-level powerhouses, all voiced their support for Orion, leaving Thundar wide-eyed in surprise.

"Thundar, this isn't about the chieftain singling you out. It's just that our horde desperately needs a powerful Spider Queen," Prophet Onyx explained, looking at Thundar.

After participating in the Myriad Races Invasion in the south, Prophet Onyx, Rendall, and Delilah all understood how crucial it was to have a disciplined and expendable cannon fodder force.

The endless desert scorpions, the swamp crocodiles of Poison Dragon Swamp, and the gnolls and satyrs of Thunderhawk City—all of these examples highlighted the importance of having disposable troops.

Orion's decision to accept the gnoll tribe was largely because the Spider Queen hadn't yet matured.

"I have no objections. I'll follow the chieftain's arrangements," Thundar said.

Orion nodded. He had brought this up with Thundar in advance to prevent any resentment or misunderstandings in the future.

"Dace, notify the council. The meeting is about to begin!"

After discussing matters with the four senior elders, the council meeting officially commenced.

This time, not only were the council members present, but Lilith and Lysinthia had also arrived.

As Orion exchanged glances with the elders from the succubi, giants, buffalofolk, and obsidian golems, he felt a sense of pride.

Even Dirtclaw, the gnoll elder sitting at the back, caught Orion's eye. However, Dirtclaw seemed out of place, exuding an air of humility that made him stand apart.

"As I've always said, our precious resources are open to all council members."

"Lilith has made significant contributions to the horde, especially during the defense against the subterranean worms. She has earned the right to receive Alpha-level resources."

With that, Orion waved his hand, and the wooden box containing the dark source crystals was delivered to Lilith.

Although Lilith had anticipated this, she hadn't expected Orion to be so direct, handing over the Alpha-level resources without hesitation.

Her hands trembled slightly as she held the wooden box. This was Alpha-level material!

Her heartbeat quickened at the thought.

Meanwhile, every council member stared at Lilith with wide eyes, their gazes fixed not on her beauty but on the wooden box in her hands, which held an irresistible allure.

Sitting to the side, Delilah watched her younger sister and couldn't help but feel grateful. Marrying Lilith to Orion had been one of the best decisions she'd ever made.

Not only had she herself become an Alpha-level powerhouse, but now her sister had a great opportunity as well.

"Ahem!"

Orion cleared his throat, drawing everyone's attention back to him.

"The next in line to receive resources will be Thundar and the Spider Queen."

"I'm looking forward to seeing which of you will become the third Alpha-level member!"

The sudden appearance of Alpha-level resources had energized the council members.

Orion didn't explain why the Spider Queen was included in the sequence, but none of the elders questioned him. Their trust in Orion was absolute.

They believed that if the Spider Queen was eligible for Alpha-level resources, there must be a good reason.

...

The focus of the council meeting all boiled down to one thing: profit and power.

Alpha-level resources were the ultimate motivator, the greatest prize. Under the lure of such benefits, Orion could see the hunger in the eyes of every elder. It wasn't just a desire for strength—it was a yearning for the prestige and influence that came with Alpha-level status.

This was precisely why Orion always distributed Alpha-level resources publicly. By tying these rewards to the elders' personal ambitions, he could drive them to push the horde forward.

Many things, once turned into habits, could subtly change a person—and eventually, the environment around them.

"Second matter: the council restructuring proposal."

Orion narrowed his hawk-like eyes, scanning the council members as he spoke in a calm but commanding tone.

"Our horde will continue to grow stronger, and the number of council members will increase. To better manage the horde, the council will be restructured into tiers and categories."

"The elders will be ranked from Level 1 to Level 9, with Level 9 elders holding a status second only to the senior elders."

"Additionally, elders will be divided into four categories: Discipline, Combat, Stewardship, and Insight. These categories will assist the four senior elders in managing the horde's discipline, warfare, logistics, and strategic planning."

Previously, all power within the Stoneheart Horde had been concentrated in Orion's hands. It wasn't until the unification of the Black Forest that he began delegating authority to the four senior elders.

Now, with the horde growing even larger, its internal structure needed further refinement to adapt to the current situation.

The old council system, inherited from the giants, was no longer sufficient. Orion understood that if the Stoneheart Horde was to thrive, he needed to build a solid foundation for a large faction.

A horde with a gradually improving system was the only way to ensure sustainable development.

Orion's words brought a heavy silence to the chieftain's tent.

If Alpha-level resources were the elders' ultimate goal, then the ability to influence the horde's affairs was the immediate, tangible reward.

Gradually, the tent filled with murmurs of discussion. When it became clear that Orion had no intention of silencing them, the atmosphere grew lively.

Sitting calmly at the head of the table, Orion observed the scene with quiet satisfaction. This was exactly the outcome he wanted.

He had laid out the general direction for the restructuring, but it was up to the horde's key figures to refine and implement the details. If he micromanaged everything, it would exhaust him and waste valuable time.

By midday, under the guidance of the four senior elders, the council restructuring proposal was finalized.

Orion didn't bother reviewing the beast-hide scrolls filled with detailed suggestions. Instead, he swept his gaze across the room, locking eyes with each elder for a moment.

"I approve the council restructuring proposal," he declared.

"However, there's one condition: aside from the four senior elders, any council member who advances to Alpha-level will automatically be promoted to the rank of Warden."

"The Warden's status and benefits will be equal to those of the senior elders, but they will not hold administrative power."

"Wardens will report directly to me. Any issues must be discussed with me personally."

Orion's tone was firm, serious, and deliberate.

Alpha-level powerhouses—Wardens—were the backbone of any horde. Orion couldn't afford to lose them lightly, nor could he tolerate betrayal. The thought of having to personally execute one of his own Alpha-level warriors was something he wanted to avoid at all costs.

After all, every Alpha-level powerhouse was someone Orion had painstakingly nurtured.

The atmosphere in the tent grew heavy once more. Seeing no objections, Orion moved on to the next topic.

"Next, we'll discuss designating Moonshadow Valley as the site for our military base."

"..."

The subsequent discussions, whether about building the military base or renaming Blackstone Town to Blackstone City, were collaborative efforts. Everyone contributed ideas and opinions.

Afterward came the much-anticipated awards ceremony, where war achievements were recognized, and rewards were distributed.

The council meeting stretched on for two days and nights.

When everything was finally settled, Orion let out a long sigh of relief.

Stepping out of the chieftain's tent, he glanced at Lilith, who was following closely behind him.

"This is a Blood Mushroom, a rare high-grade magical plant. It can trigger small-scale elemental surges and will help you with your next advancement."

"When you attempt to break through, consume it."

Lilith didn't say a word. She simply nodded, then stepped forward and took Orion's arm. Under the watchful eyes of the horde, she walked with him toward their tent.

In the Giant Tribe, only a wife could walk arm-in-arm with the chieftain in public.

Lilith was making a statement, asserting her position—not just to the horde, but also to Garland Tribe's Saintess Violet, who had just entered the tent.

"The Blood Mushroom... Violet has one as well, but hers is being used as a seed."

"This is one of our horde's rarest resources. I'm assigning you to oversee her cultivation efforts."

Orion gazed at Lilith for a moment before explaining Violet's cultivation plan.

He also handed over Violet's management to Lilith.

"My dear Orion, I won't let you down!" Lilith replied with a smile.

Orion nodded. With Lilith by his side, he looked out at the Blackstone City he had built with his own hands. A surge of pride and ambition welled up within him.

The next morning, Orion was the first to wake.

To his left lay Lilith, to his right Lysinthia, and sprawled across his chest was Violet.

Though petite, Violet had been particularly enthusiastic the night before. Eager to please Orion, she had been exceptionally proactive, only collapsing from exhaustion and falling asleep on his chest.

Even in her sleep, her legs instinctively clung to Orion's cock, as if it gave her a sense of security.

Orion gently moved Violet aside, preparing to get up.

As he did, he noticed Lilith watching him with her bright, knowing eyes.

Orion leaned down to kiss her and spoke softly.

"Rest well. I'm heading out to inspect the eastern section of Moonshadow Valley. The plans should be finalized today."

Lilith smiled, nodded, and closed her eyes again, drifting back to sleep.

Stepping out of the tent, Orion was greeted by four fully armed guards standing at attention.

He stretched, then pulled out four bottles of Pet Pills, tossing one to each of the Frost Wolves, who had grown significantly larger.

"Not bad, not bad. My little pups have all grown up!"

Orion patted the massive wolves on their heads, occasionally flattening their ears, clearly enjoying the moment.

Turning to Dace, he asked casually, "Have Prophet and the others finished their preparations?"

"Chieftain, as per your instructions, Prophet and the others have already designated an area. They're waiting for your approval."

"Good. Lead the way!"

Chapter 158 Do you like my big cock?

When Orion arrived at the eastern region of Moonshadow Valley, near the underground fissure, the area was already bustling with activity. Obsidian Golems, Geckos, and Gnolls were hard at work. The cannon fodder troops had been rounded up by Rendall and forced into labor, building the walls of the new military base.

"Chieftain, we've surveyed the entire area and finalized the plans!"

Prophet Onyx and Rendall approached Orion one after the other, greeting him respectfully. Orion nodded in acknowledgment and followed Prophet Onyx toward the designated area.

"Chieftain, as per the council's decision, we've enclosed the entire eastern section of Moonshadow Valley."

"With this many hands assisting, we estimate the construction will be completed before winter sets in."

Orion nodded. Winter was only two months away, leaving little time to spare. However, with the cannon fodder troops under Prophet Onyx's command, manpower wasn't an issue.

"This area will do," Orion said decisively. "Prophet, don't forget to construct the secret tunnels for the cave spiders."

Prophet Onyx nodded. He had personally taken charge of this project precisely because of these tunnels. They would be crucial for the cave spiders to launch surprise attacks from behind enemy lines, and there was no room for error.

Orion lingered in the eastern region for a while, inspecting the progress. Just as he was about to leave, Rendall stopped him.

"Chieftain, I've found a promising young talent among the horde members!"

"He's only four years old, but he's incredibly strong for his age. He's been pestering everyone to teach him how to wield a trident. He says he wants to grow up to be as strong as you."

Orion raised an eyebrow, intrigued. He hadn't expected Rendall to stop him for something like this.

"One of our giant tribe?"

"Yes, Chieftain! Would you like to meet the little ones tomorrow? They all look up to you!"

Orion fell silent. He hadn't paid much attention to the younger members of the horde before. Now, hearing Rendall's words, he felt a spark of interest. After all, those little ones were the future of the horde. It wouldn't hurt to take a look.

"Alright, I'll visit them during their morning training tomorrow."

"Great! I'll make sure it's a surprise for them!" Rendall said with a grin.

As Orion turned to leave again, Rendall stopped him once more.

"Chieftain, many of the young warriors from Stoneheart and Ironbone have approached me."

"They want to try their luck in the abyss."

Orion froze mid-step, his brow furrowing deeply.

"Rendall, are you certain about this?"

"Yes, Chieftain. It's their own decision."

The Black Forest was riddled with entrances to the abyss, some of which lay within the horde's territory. Orion had ventured into the first layer of one such abyss branch before, where he had encountered the Shadow Spinner. Deeper within, even more terrifying entities lurked.

In the past, the entrances to these abyssal caves had been guarded by warriors who held the keys, making it nearly impossible for ordinary members to enter. This restriction was meant to prevent reckless young warriors from throwing their lives away in pursuit of glory.

But now, with the horde's survival no longer in question, the abyssal caves could be opened more frequently.

"Three days from now, I'll meet them at the back mountain of Moonshadow Valley."

"Have them wait by the stone gate. I'll send a team of bloodline warriors to escort them."

"If the results are promising, I'll make this an annual event."

After some thought, Orion agreed to the proposal. The abyssal caves were dangerous, but they also offered opportunities for rapid growth. He couldn't let his own fears extinguish such chances for the horde's young warriors.

"Understood! I'll spread the word as soon as I return!" Rendall said, his face lighting up with a childlike excitement.

"When did Rendall start teaching the young ones?" Orion asked his guards as they walked.

Dace, Otho, and Beyn all shrugged, indicating they didn't know. Torba, however, gave a shy smile and replied, "Chieftain, during the three days you were away, Rendall began teaching the young ones in the giant tribe."

"My own little one is learning from him too!"

Orion thought for a moment and realized Torba was referring to the three days he had spent patrolling the Black Forest. He nodded, suddenly understanding why Rendall had chosen to stay with the giant tribe and care for its people.

It was because of those little ones.

Just as Orion was lost in thought, a tribe member came running toward him in a hurry.

"Chieftain, the Stewardship Elder has requested your presence. She's waiting for you in the tent."

Orion narrowed his eyes, studying the succubus before him. He recognized her—one of Delilah's subordinates, responsible for intelligence gathering. If Delilah was summoning him, it must be something important.

"I'll head back now."

About an hour later, Orion entered the chieftain's tent.

"My dear chieftain, there's news from the south," Delilah said with a sly smile.

"Speak."

Orion sat down heavily in his chair, waiting for her report.

"Our gnoll scouts stationed in Thunderwood Forest have brought back some information."

"Recently, harpies have been spotted frequently in the northern part of Thunderwood Forest."

Delilah stopped there, offering no further details. The intelligence was sparse.

"Harpies?" Orion muttered. "Are they reclaiming territory, or searching for something?"

He seemed to be speaking to himself, but Delilah answered anyway.

"There's no additional information yet."

"However, based on my analysis, there are a few possibilities."

Orion took a sip of the wine Delilah had poured for him and gestured for her to continue.

"One possibility is exactly what you're thinking—they're reclaiming territory and consolidating scattered bloodline warriors."

"Another is that they're searching for high-grade magical plants or perhaps even a specific individual. The latter seems most likely."

"And the third possibility is that they're preparing to drive a beast tide."

The last suggestion made Orion's eyes widen in shock.

He had a gut feeling that the harpies' appearance was indeed tied to a beast tide, likely aimed at further weakening Lord Gareth's faction.

"Keep investigating. Notify me immediately if you learn anything new."

"As you wish, Chieftain."

"Anything else?"

"Yes, but it's a personal matter."

Delilah stepped behind Orion, her hands massaging his shoulders as she began to remove his clothing.

Then, without hesitation, she leaned down and took his cock into her mouth.

Orion's eyebrows shot up in surprise. Delilah was being unusually bold.

This tent is primarily used for meetings and discussions.

But Delilah's audacity and enthusiasm quickly ignited Orion's desire, and his cock hardened instantly.

Delilah knelt on the ground, performing oral sex on Orion while pulling her panties down to her thighs.

Delilah gazed lovingly at Orion before slowly reaching her hand to gently stroke her clitoris.

At the same time, Orion lifted Delilah's top, softly caressing her breasts.

"Mmm... mmmmmm..."

Delilah couldn't help but moan, feeling pleasure as Orion simply squeezed her breasts.

"Alright, let's begin."

Upon hearing this, Delilah immediately showed an expectant expression and leaned directly in front of Orion. She liked this position.

"Arch your back a little." Orion gave Delilah's delicate rear a firm slap, causing her to emit a low moan as her hips obediently lifted slightly.

Orion parted Delilah's entrance with his fingers, pressing his glans gently against her sensitive clitoris and began to rub it softly.

"Mm-ah... ah..."

Delilah's body seemed to have been triggered by a switch, arching her back even higher as she hummed and gently swayed her hips.

Hearing Delilah's moans, Orion slowly inserted his member into her vagina.

"Mmmmh... too big, hmm... dear chieftain... slower... a bit slower."

But Orion didn't stop; instead, he increased his effort, thrusting his large cock deep inside Delilah's most intimate depths.

"Ah... Yes..."

Delilah suddenly cried out, her body tensing as her already tight vagina clenched around Orion's cock.

"Mmm... mmm... mm oh... oh oh oh..."

Soon, Delilah adapted to Orion's rhythm. Her vagina secreted a large amount of love juices, becoming incredibly lubricated.

"Mmmmmm... yes... dear Orion... oh yes."

Delilah continued to moan repeatedly. Her body moved rhythmically with Orion's actions.

"Delilah, do you like my big cock?" Orion continued to thrust rapidly without pause, each time reaching the bottom.

"Ah... I like it... I like it..."

At that moment, Delilah's whole body tensed suddenly. Her vagina contracted, and a large amount of moisture sprayed out from her entrance.

"Ahhh... mm oh..."

Accompanied by Delilah's moans, her delicate body kept twitching, her long, taut legs swaying back and forth.

Seeing that Delilah had reached her climax, Orion stopped. He had Delilah turn her body to face him and then grabbed her thighs, lifting her up.

Orion then held Delilah in his arms, gripping her thighs firmly and thrusting his hips, beginning to pump in and out.

Delilah held onto Orion's strong arms, her breasts shaking continuously as her body flew up and down in rhythm with his thrusts.

Her pair of sexy thighs kept swaying in the air, the immense pleasure tightening the backs of her feet, and all ten toes curled tightly.

This thrusting position was much more intense than before. Delilah's body was continuously lifted up and then dropped heavily, with Orion's large cock forcefully hitting the deepest part of her vagina each time.

"Ahhh... dear... it's reached the very inside, my Orion, I love you so so much."

Chapter 159 Maybe we can give you a child of your own

As dawn broke, Orion left the tent, his guards following closely behind. He made his way to the central square of Blackstone City, where the horde's younglings were training.

The sight before him was lively and full of energy. Giant children, succubi, Buffalofolk, Obsidian Golems, and Gnolls—all the younglings from the various tribes—were gathered together, their laughter and shouts filling the air. Their presence brought a vibrant sense of life to the horde.

At some point, the instructors for these younglings had become the Hero-level warriors from each tribe. Every child had the opportunity to learn from other races' instructors, gaining an understanding of their own strengths while also recognizing their weaknesses.

"Chieftain, you're here!" Rendall greeted Orion warmly as he approached, standing beside him to watch the younglings train.

"Elder, were these instructors your arrangement or Delilah's?" Orion asked, his gaze fixed on the bustling training grounds.

"It was the Stewardship Elder's idea," Rendall replied, clearly impressed. He hadn't expected Delilah's plan of rotating elite instructors from different tribes to yield such excellent results.

A few days ago, Rendall had taken it upon himself to teach the younglings and had discovered several promising talents. He had already recommended them to the appropriate mentors.

"Chieftain, wait here. I'll bring the boy who wants to learn the trident and spear to meet you!" Rendall said with a grin.

Orion nodded, signaling that he would wait.

Moments later, Rendall returned, leading a young giant boy with a single braid tied atop his head.

"Chieftain, this is him—Rolan. He'll be five years old soon!"

Orion studied the boy. His bright eyes sparkled with determination, and his unique braid gave him a distinct look.

"I hear you want to learn the trident and spear from me?" Orion asked.

"Yes, Chieftain! I want to become a great hero like you!" Rolan replied, his voice filled with youthful enthusiasm.

Orion's lips curled into a faint smile. "Rendall tells me you're naturally strong?"

"Yes, Chieftain! I can beat all the other younglings in the horde!" Rolan declared proudly.

Orion chuckled softly, amused by the boy's confidence. It seemed Rolan had picked up Rendall's habit of calling his peers "younglings."

After a moment of thought, Orion retrieved his old Bloodthirsty Trident, a weapon he had long since outgrown. He drove it deep into the ground before Rolan.

"Rolan, if you can pull this trident out, you can come to me to learn how to wield it."

Orion's smile carried a hint of challenge and expectation. However, Rolan's response caught him off guard.

"Chieftain, if I pull it out, does that mean the trident is mine as a reward?"

Rendall's eyes widened, and he was about to scold the boy for his audacity, but Orion raised a hand to stop him.

"Yes," Orion said with a grin. "If you can pull it out, the trident is yours."

"But I'll add a condition. If you can't pull it out before winter arrives and the first snow falls, don't bother coming to me. And the trident? I'll give it to the bravest bloodline warrior in the horde."

"Dace, spread the word—this challenge applies to all younglings under six in the horde!"

Orion's laughter was hearty and infectious. To motivate the younglings, he was willing to part with a treasure. The Bloodthirsty Trident was a Hero-level weapon, for the Stoneheart Horde, it was a rare and valuable artifact.

Rolan glanced at Rendall, who gave no objection, then turned back to Orion. With determination in his eyes, he stepped forward and gripped the trident. He strained with all his might, but despite his best efforts, the weapon didn't budge an inch.

Orion wasn't surprised. Smiling, he turned and began walking back to his tent.

"Orion, is it true? The whole horde is saying you're planning to take on a disciple!"

As soon as Orion entered the tent, Lilith approached him, helping him remove his cloak.

"I've thought about it," Orion admitted. "But for now, I just want to inspire the younglings. They're the future of the horde, after all."

He turned to say more, but before he could, Lysinthia and Violet entered, each carrying a bowl of water.

Orion paused, momentarily caught off guard, but quickly recovered. He extended both hands, taking the bowls from the two women and drinking them down in one go.

Lilith watched the subtle "competition" between Lysinthia and Violet with a calm expression, as if she hadn't noticed anything at all.

"Orion," Lilith said with a teasing smile, "why don't you try harder? Maybe we can give you a child of your own!"

Orion froze, his face darkening slightly. He was already spending every night with these women—how much harder could he try?

That said, it was true that none of the women he had been with, including Delilah, had conceived. Orion couldn't figure out why. He could only assume that cross-species reproduction was far more difficult than he had anticipated.

Tonight, Orion once again made love to his women in turn. Only after they had fallen asleep did he lie back on the animal hides and focus his thoughts on his status panel.

For the past few weeks, Orion had been consuming high-grade magical plants looted from Thunderwood Forest. Over time, his stats had steadily increased, and now they had reached a significant milestone.

- Strength: 4010/5000 (+8220)

- Agility: 3756/5000 (+236)

- Intelligence: 4001/5000 (+200)

- Constitution: 3825/5000 (+200)

- Resistance: 20% (against all negative states)

- Bloodline Purity: 72% (Titan)

Today, Orion's focus on his status panel was due to a breakthrough. After consuming the last of his high-grade magical plants, both his Strength and Intelligence had surpassed the 4000 mark—a significant achievement.

The downside, however, was that his stockpile of magical plants was now completely depleted.

"As expected, plundering is still the fastest way to grow stronger," Orion muttered to himself.

After studying his stats for a while, he shifted his attention to the Survivor's Platform. As usual, he initiated a trade with Aerin.

"Elf, it's time to trade."

Aerin wasted no time, as if afraid Orion might change his mind. She quickly sent over her stockpile of Pet Pills and mid-grade magical plants.

Only after the trade was complete did Aerin respond.

"Hulk, where have you been these past six months? I thought you were dead!"

"Working. Where else would I get the crystal cores to buy your Pet Pills?"

"Hulk, if you're planning to disappear for a long time again, could you at least let me know in advance? Honestly, I was a little worried about you."

Orion didn't reply, instead focusing on other matters.

Meanwhile, in the Forest of Nature, Aerin hummed a cheerful tune as she sorted through her newly acquired crystal cores. For some reason, reconnecting with Hulk had put her in an unusually good mood.

"This guy... He must have been out raiding again. There's no way he could have hunted this many crystal cores on his own!"

Still, Aerin was thrilled. With the crystal cores she had received, she could purchase more items to enhance her strength.

After completing his trade with Aerin, Orion composed another message, this time directed at Arthas.

"Arthas, my old friend, what price must I pay to obtain a Lord's Stone?"

Orion's message was straightforward. He didn't bother asking whether Arthas had a Lord's Stone, he cut straight to the point, asking what it would cost.

Arthas replied almost instantly: "Hulk, my friend, what do you have to offer?"

This response left Orion silent. What did he have to offer?

The truth was, nothing.

Anything Orion considered valuable would likely be beneath Arthas's notice. Even if he offered crystal cores or firestones, the sheer quantity required would likely be astronomical—far beyond what Orion had in his reserves.

With a sigh, Orion ended the conversation, unable to continue.

Necro Realm, Bone Throne

Sitting atop the Bone Throne, Arthas waited for a reply that never came. He chuckled to himself, already guessing the reason.

"Such pride and self-respect," he mused. "But then again, who among us survivors, reborn from the ashes of the apocalypse, doesn't carry a bit of arrogance?"

"Hulk, I look forward to the day you contact me again. What will you bring to the table then? Or perhaps... what terms will you agree to?"

Arthas laughed, his voice echoing through the cold, lifeless halls of the Necro Realm.

Years ago, Arthas had been much like Hulk—cautious, wary of the Survivor's Platform, yet desperate to extract every advantage from it.

He could see that Hulk only turned to the platform when faced with insurmountable challenges. And the Lord's Stone? Arthas was certain Hulk would remain helpless without it.

Since ascending to the Bone Throne, Arthas had spent his idle moments monitoring the Survivor's Platform. He wouldn't admit it to Hulk, but there were many beings as powerful as himself lurking on the platform.

These ancient survivors, with their vast reserves of wealth and power, often snatched up rare items the moment they appeared. This was one of the reasons why survivors like Orion struggled to find Alpha-level or higher resources on the platform.

Blackstone City, Chieftain's Tent

Frustrated by his failed negotiation with Arthas, Orion turned his attention to another trade notification. This one was a delayed trade initiated by someone who had long ignored him: Scarecrow.

The trade was for 100 tons of grain.

Without hesitation, Orion accepted the trade, spending five C-grade crystal cores. The price wasn't cheap, but it wasn't unreasonable either. For Blackstone City, with its population of over ten thousand, 100 tons of grain would only last two days.

"The more, the better!" Orion sent a follow-up message to Scarecrow.

To his surprise, Scarecrow replied almost immediately:

"The more, the better? Are you serious, or are you joking?"

Orion couldn't help but laugh. It seemed even the aloof Scarecrow could be swayed by the promise of profit.

"Do you think I was joking before?" Orion teased, subtly pointing out Scarecrow's previous indifference.

"You misunderstood. From spring to autumn, I'm not on the Survivor's Platform," Scarecrow explained. "Of course, I don't know if your seasons align with mine, but it's already winter here."

Orion's eyes narrowed as he read the message. If it was already winter where Scarecrow was, then Scarecrow wasn't on the same continent—or at least not in the same region. Blackstone City, located in the Black Forest, was still in summer.

"Do you have more grain?" Orion asked, choosing not to pry into Scarecrow's location. Respect was the foundation of any relationship, and Orion understood this well.

"I do, but I'm not sure you can afford it," Scarecrow replied.

Orion didn't bother responding. Instead, he initiated a trade, placing tens of thousands of C-grade crystal cores on the table.

"Whoa! Did you rob a major faction or something?" Scarecrow exclaimed, his previously aloof demeanor completely shattered.

"Let's trade," Orion replied simply.

What followed was a series of rapid transactions. By the end, Orion had purchased 100,000 tons of grain—enough to feed Blackstone City's population for five years.

"Friend, if you need more grain in the future, just leave me a message. I'll set some aside for you!" Scarecrow promised. "But remember, I'm only online during the winter."

With 100,000 tons of grain secured, Orion felt a weight lift from his shoulders. Even if Scarecrow stopped selling to him, he now had plenty of time to find alternative sources.

More importantly, this trade had established a connection between him and Scarecrow. Whether they could be considered friends was another matter, but at the very least, Orion was now one of Scarecrow's biggest customers.

Satisfied, Orion allowed himself to relax. Closing his eyes, he quickly drifted into a deep sleep.

In a chaotic straw hut amidst a snowy expanse, a humanoid Scarecrow lay sprawled out, looking utterly at ease.

Hayden, the Scarecrow, casually munched on the C-grade crystal cores Orion had traded to him, popping them into his mouth like apples.

As a survivor, Hayden often felt unlucky to have been reborn as a Scarecrow. His species was bizarre, existing in a strange realm populated entirely by others like him.

Scarecrows didn't need to eat or drink, but to grow stronger, they had to consume items imbued with energy—crystal cores, beast meat, or even certain minerals.

What made Hayden's realm even stranger was its peculiar rule: every spring, all Scarecrows were compelled to tend their farms, planting and cultivating crops until the autumn harvest.

Once the planting began, they couldn't stop. They were trapped in this cycle until the harvest was complete.

Hayden had nearly gone insane during his first planting season. Or perhaps he had gone insane.

But over the years, he had gradually adapted to his Scarecrow body and its peculiarities. He even began to find joy in the absurdity of his existence.

"That Hulk guy sure has a lot of crystal cores," Hayden mused, tossing another core into his mouth.

"What does he need so much grain for? He must be part of a powerful faction. Or maybe his faction is at war?"

"Should I raise my prices next time?"

"Eh... better not. Who knows? Maybe we'll become friends. It'd be nice to have someone to chat with."

Few would have guessed that Hayden, the seemingly aloof grain merchant of the Survivor's Platform, was actually a chatterbox.

Chapter 160 The beast tide is not a threat but an opportunity

As the days settled into a calm routine, Orion found himself increasingly satisfied with the progress around the underground fissure. Watching the city walls rise brick by brick gave him a sense of fulfillment. However, just as he and Prophet Onyx were about to inspect the secret tunnels being constructed for the cave spiders, a succubus bloodline warrior approached them in haste.

"Chieftain, Prophet, my Queen has urgent news to report. There's word from the south!"

Orion paused, his expression tightening. He had a good idea of what this was about.

"Go notify the eight council elders. The council will convene in half an hour!" Orion ordered.

With the southern situation potentially escalating, Orion lost interest in lingering at the construction site. He and Prophet Onyx, accompanied by four guards, made their way back to the chieftain's tent.

Half an hour later, the chieftain's tent was filled with the key figures of the horde. In addition to the four senior elders—Prophet Onyx, Rendall, Delilah, and Thundar—the eight council elders were also present:

- Earthshaker: A Buffalofolk and one of the two most powerful members of the council.

- Desdemona and Vespera: Succubi known for their intelligence and strategic thinking.

- Rockwell: The former chieftain of the Obsidian Golem tribe, a figure whose strength rivaled Earthshaker's.

- Dirtclaw: A gnoll and the deputy commander of the cannon fodder troops, whose unique position made him indispensable in war planning.

- Slate, Samson, and Ursa: Giants, with Ursa being a newcomer. She is Rendall's daughter, known for her immense strength and striking appearance, especially her voluptuous breasts and large hips, which have garnered the admiration of many young male giants.

Orion was well aware that the council elders were a mixed bag. Many had earned their positions through battlefield achievements rather than administrative or strategic ability. Improving the council's overall quality would be a slow process, but with the ongoing restructuring, he was confident things would improve over time.

"Find a seat, and let's begin," Orion said, gesturing for the council elders to sit. Once everyone was settled, he nodded to Delilah, signaling her to share the news.

Delilah's gaze swept across the room, lingering briefly on the eight council elders. She knew that many of them were unaware of the full scope of the situation, so she took a moment to organize her thoughts before speaking.

"At the chieftain's request, and to meet our horde's intelligence needs in the south, we left behind a number of gnoll scouts in Thunderwood Forest during our retreat north."

"Recently, Thunderwood Forest has been restless. Alpha-level harpies have been appearing frequently. Based on the timing, it aligns with the annual beast tide migration."

"In other words, the beast tide from Thunderwood Forest is about to begin."

This revelation wasn't news to the senior elders, who had been briefed earlier. However, it was the first time the council elders were hearing it.

"According to our intelligence, there's an 80% chance that a beast tide will occur earlier this year," Delilah continued. "The question now is: how should we respond?"

Her question was directed at the eight council elders. Orion and the senior elders remained silent, clearly intending to observe how the council elders would handle the situation. This wasn't just a discussion about the beast tide—it was also a test of the council elders' capabilities.

The tent fell into a heavy silence. The council elders wore a variety of expressions: some deep in thought, others frowning, and a few looking completely lost.

Among them, Rockwell, the Obsidian Golem chieftain, stood out. Once the most powerful figure in the Black Forest before Orion's rise, Rockwell had initially resisted joining the Stoneheart Horde. However, after participating in the myriad races invasion, he had come to realize how naive his earlier ambitions had been.

The invasion had shown him the harsh reality: without the horde's protection, the Obsidian Golem tribe would have been annihilated. Whether it was the beast tides, dark beast tides, or the myriad races invasion, none of these threats could be faced alone.

Prophet Onyx had spoken to Rockwell after their return to Moonshadow Valley, delivering a pointed reminder:

"Rockwell, has your perspective changed?"

"Don't answer me now. Answer yourself."

"How many bloodline warriors did we take south, and how many returned?"

"This year was bad. What about the years to come?"

"The horde grows stronger every year. You've seen Chieftain Orion's capabilities with your own eyes. I don't need to say more."

"You're the chieftain of the Obsidian Golem tribe. You need to think carefully about your people's future."

"If you still want to leave, take those willing to follow you and go. I'll personally apologize to Orion on your behalf."

"But remember this: Alpha-level resources are only available to council members."

"You've earned great merit in this campaign. Your strength and status put you near the top of the list for Alpha-level resources. If you leave, you may never advance to Alpha-level in your lifetime."

"Since Rendall, I've received Alpha-level resources. Stewardship Elder Delilah has also received them and successfully advanced."

"Have you thought about who might be next?"

These words had stuck with Rockwell, and now, as he sat in the council meeting, he felt a deep sense of gratitude for Prophet Onyx's guidance.

Breaking the silence, Rockwell stood and addressed Orion directly.

"Chieftain, I am willing to follow your orders and fight on the front lines to defend the horde against the beast tide!"

Rockwell didn't have a concrete plan for dealing with the beast tide, but he understood the importance of demonstrating his loyalty.

Orion met Rockwell's gaze and smiled faintly. It seemed the Obsidian Golem chieftain had finally come around.

Delilah, noticing the exchange, glanced at Prophet Onyx with a knowing smile. She understood that Rockwell's change in attitude was largely thanks to Onyx's efforts.

Orion gestured for Rockwell to sit and turned his attention to the rest of the council elders.

Seeing no one else speak, Desdemona, the succubus elder, rose gracefully and bowed slightly.

"Chieftain, may I ask: is there a high likelihood of Alpha-level beasts appearing in this beast tide?"

"Or, more specifically, will they engage us directly?"

Orion considered her question for a moment before replying.

"The beast tide will likely be driven by flying beasts or harpies. The presence of Alpha-level creatures is almost certain, but whether they'll descend to engage us is uncertain."

Desdemona nodded thoughtfully before addressing the room.

"In that case, I believe the beast tide is not a threat but an opportunity—a chance to launch a large-scale hunting operation and stockpile food for the winter."

Orion's smile widened, and he gestured for her to continue.

"Our horde has gained tens of thousands of new bloodline warriors, and the daily consumption of grain is staggering."

"With winter approaching, we'll soon lose the ability to raid or hunt outside our territory. For the horde's survival, we cannot afford to let this beast tide pass us by."

"To us, the beast tide is food. We must seize this opportunity."

Desdemona's words earned nods of approval from the senior elders and sparked interest among the other council elders.

Orion decided it was time to reveal his plan.

"Desdemona is correct. The senior elders and I have already decided to launch a large-scale hunting operation targeting the beast tide."

"I'm pleased to see council elders stepping up to take responsibility," Orion said, glancing at Rockwell.
"This is a critical matter for the horde's survival."

"As for the Alpha-level beasts, leave them to me and the senior elders. Your task is to manage the hunting operation."

"This is both a test and an opportunity to solidify your positions within the council."

"Don't waste it."

Orion's words carried weight, and the council elders' expressions grew serious. They understood the stakes.

"High-ranking positions in the Stoneheart Horde will always go to those with ability," Orion warned.
"Those who lack it will be replaced. I hope you'll grow alongside the horde."

The meeting continued for hours as the council elders worked out the details of their roles and responsibilities. Orion and the senior elders refrained from intervening, leaving the discussion to be led by Thundar, whose expertise in military logistics made him the natural choice.

Once the meeting concluded and the council elders left the tent, Orion turned to the senior elders.

"What do you think?" he asked.

Prophet Onyx was the first to respond. "Chieftain, I suggest taking Earthshaker on the next myriad races invasion. He's intelligent, and the Buffalofolk need a strong leader from their own ranks."

Orion nodded. "I've always seen potential in Earthshaker. That's why I left him and Thundar in Moonshadow Valley—to support Lilith when needed. So far, they've proven themselves."

Thundar's chest swelled with pride at Orion's praise. He felt a renewed sense of loyalty and purpose.

Buzz!

At that moment, deep within Moonshadow Valley, an unfamiliar Alpha-level aura erupted, sweeping across the land with reckless abandon.

The unrestrained Alpha-level pressure forced many ordinary people to their knees, shaking the entirety of Blackstone City.

Orion, Prophet Onyx, Rendall, Delilah, and Thundar all rose from their seats and stepped out of their tents, their gazes fixed on the depths of Moonshadow Valley.

"It's my sister!"

Before even stepping out of the tent, Delilah had already sensed Lilith's presence.

Orion nodded silently, glancing at Delilah to signal that he, too, had felt it.

As they exited the chieftain's tent, Orion saw Lilith approaching from the stone gates of Moonshadow Valley. Her aura, unrestrained and overwhelming, sent waves of shock and excitement through the gathered people.

It wasn't until she reached the chieftain's tent that Lilith finally reined in her aura completely.

Orion smiled as he stepped forward, wrapping an arm around Lilith's slender waist and pulling her into an embrace.

At the same time, his voice rang out loud and clear.

"Dace, spread the word: Lilith has ascended to Alpha-level and been promoted to Warden. The Stoneheart horde will celebrate for three days and three nights—bonfires will burn, and the feast will flow without end!"

"Otho, pass the order: in honor of Lilith's promotion to Warden, the cannon fodder troops will receive an extra serving of meat with every meal!"

After issuing his commands, Orion led Lilith into the chieftain's tent, his arm still around her.

This was a joyous occasion, one that had been anticipated. With a pure Alpha-level dark source crystal and a Blood Mushroom infused with elemental surges, Lilith's chances of successfully ascending were far greater than her sister Delilah's had ever been.

"Lilith, you've come at the perfect time. You should hear what everyone has to say about the eight council elders."

Lilith nodded but chose not to sit beside Orion or take a seat behind the four senior elders. Instead, she stood quietly behind Orion, like a dutiful attendant.

Delilah glanced at her sister, a flicker of light flashing in her eyes.

She thought Lilith had made a very wise choice.

Under normal circumstances, Lilith could have taken a seat behind the four elders.

But she didn't. Instead, she chose to stand behind Orion.

This seemingly small gesture carried a significant message: Lilith was subtly signaling to everyone that she and Orion were a united front. She had no intention of competing for power with the elders.

In simpler terms, Lilith was telling Onyx, Rendall, and Thundar that they were not rivals vying for influence. Instead, their relationship was one of indirect hierarchy.